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# *FS* TODAY

## 2004 YEAR IN REVIEW

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Welcome to *FS Today's* year in review! For the past few years, the Forest Service has seen developments that, for many of us, have changed our professional lives. *FS Today* is one way of staying abreast of new developments, and I encourage everyone to read it.

But in case you didn't always have the time, we're offering this year in review. In these pages, you'll find summarized many of the most important developments to affect our agency in 2004. We've gotten critical new authorities and guidelines to help us fulfill our mission, such as stewardship contracting and a new planning rule, and you'll find these discussed. Some of the articles outline progress we're making in addressing the Four Threats, particularly fire and fuels, invasive species, and unmanaged outdoor recreation. You'll also find articles on the progress we're making in putting our financial house in order and getting more efficient business practices. These are tremendous accomplishments.

We're in the process of celebrating our centennial, and some of the articles in this review describe the hard work that went into preparing for it. The 2004 fire season brought up safety issues, including those associated with large airtankers and other aircraft. We couldn't do our work without partnerships, and a number of articles acknowledge our partners and celebrate our joint accomplishments. In this review, you can also learn about our new Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns.

To do our jobs well, we need to understand the agency we work in—our work environment in the broadest sense. There's no better place to start than here.

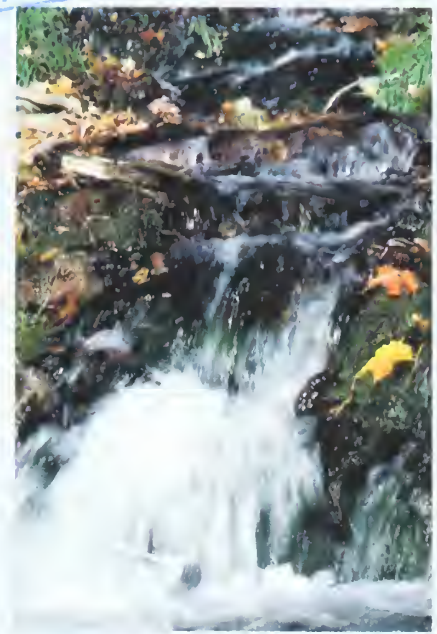
*Dale N. Bosworth*  
Chief



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## *Roadless Protection Finalized for Tongass National Forest*

**O**n December 23, 2003, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that it would not apply the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (roadless rule) to the Tongass National Forest, completing the settlement of a court challenge to the roadless rule brought by the State of Alaska. A final rule to temporarily exclude the national forest from the roadless rule was published in the *Federal Register*.

J A N U A R Y 23 , 2004



*Tongass National Forest*

## *M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F* *Stewardship Contracting: Let's Do It Right*

**W**e've had full stewardship contracting authority for almost a year now, and some 30 projects are under way. We will be watched very closely to make sure that we use this tool as intended. That's why we just issued new direction on stewardship contracting—to make sure we do it right.

Our critics are just itching to say, "Told you so!" We must prove them wrong. We've got to be smart in how we implement stewardship contracting. Above all, we've got to remember that stewardship contracting is not mainly about generating funds to get more work done. It's about working with partners and local communities to restore long-term ecosystem health.

I will expect every line officer to closely follow the new direction. We've got to focus on what we leave on the land, not on what we take away. If we show the results the public wants, then public confidence will grow in our use of stewardship contracting—and of our other new tools. If we don't, then we might not get another chance for a while.

The stakes are high. Let's do it right!

*Dale N. Bosworth*  
Chief

## *Forest Service Has One of Top Government Web Sites*

**A** recent survey of 35 Government Web sites rates the Forest Service site (<http://www.fs.fed.us>) among the top-scoring sites, with an overall rating of 72 out of a possible 100. The survey was conducted by the University of Michigan and ForeSee Results, a firm that releases the annual American Customer Service Satisfaction Index, a measure of how well the Government serves the public. Using the same methodology, the group evaluated Government agency Web sites on content, functionality, look and feel, navigation, search, site performance, satisfaction, likelihood to return, and likelihood to recommend.



“We are extremely pleased with these results,” said Donovan Albert, National Web Manager. “Forest Service field offices across the Nation have worked hard to implement new templates that provide improved look and feel, a consistent Web presence, and better organization of the Forest Service Web site. Our excellent ratings are the result of these efforts.”

The Forest Service Web site achieved high scores in the areas of likelihood to return, site performance, and likelihood to recommend, outperforming both public and private sector sites surveyed. Forest Service Web visitors identified navigation and search as areas that need to be improved.

The national templates have been implemented in most Forest Service regional sites and in about 50 percent of forest sites. “We expect that our scores in the area of navigation and search will improve as more forest sites implement the national web templates,” Albert said. Chief Bosworth issued a letter early in 2003 directing all Forest Service units to use the national templates.

Forest Service Web visitors who completed the survey said they are more than just virtual visitors. More than 55 percent indicated they visit a national forest at least once a month. When asked what type of information they wanted to see more of on the Web site, they requested more online maps and photos; more information on plants, animals, and trees; and more recreation-related information.

## *Forest Service Debuts National Partnership Office*

*By Jan Engert, National Partnership Program Manager, Washington Office*

**T**he National Partnership Office of the Forest Service debuted at the Interagency Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship Conference in November 2003 in Los Angeles, CA, and shared a corporate message of making partnership and collaboration a part of the core business of the Forest Service.

“Partnerships are not new to the Forest Service,” said Chief Dale Bosworth at a conference side meeting, “but we have to stop thinking of them as something we do in addition to our real jobs. Let’s resolve to make partnerships a key part of how we carry out our core business.”

Associate Chief Sally Collins highlighted the new National Partnership Office as a commitment by the Forest Service to help build employee and partner skills in working together, as well as improving national policy and guidance on partnerships.

For more information, visit the user-friendly online resource center at <http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org>, or contact the National Partnership Office at 202–205–1072.

F E B R U A R Y 6 , 2 0 0 4

## *Forest Service Receives Second Clean Audit Opinion*

**O**n January 24, 2004, KPMG, the independent public accounting firm used by the Forest Service, issued an unqualified (clean) audit opinion to the Forest Service for the second year in a row. This opinion also allowed the U.S. Department of Agriculture to receive a clean opinion for the second consecutive year on the Department's Consolidated Audit. The fiscal year (FY) 2003 Forest Service opinion identified four material weaknesses, two fewer than FY 2002, and six reportable conditions, one fewer than in FY 2002.

F E B R U A R Y 20 , 2 0 0 4

## *M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F Financial Management Progress*

**I**'m proud to report that the Forest Service received a second consecutive unqualified "clean" audit opinion for fiscal year (FY) 2003. But the effort was huge, and we simply can't sustain it in time for the next audit deadline in November. Our financial management leadership is mapping out what we need to do in the next 30 to 120 days to give the auditors more confidence in our internal controls and financial processes for the FY 2004 audit. Also, next week at the National Leadership Team Meeting a proposal for restructuring our financial management organization and processes will be discussed. It is becoming increasingly apparent that we need to make significant changes in this area if we are to maintain unqualified clean opinions in the future. With more confidence in us, the auditors will sample fewer items, giving them time to complete their work. To help build their confidence, we'll implement a monitoring plan to track progress and results, plus a communication plan to make our managers and employees aware of key objectives for budget and finance. I expect every one of you to pitch in and support the effort.

*Dale N. Bosworth*  
Chief



## *Jim Oftedal: “Unsung Hero” of U.S. Department of Agriculture Aids Youth in Rural Areas*

*By Robert Rodriguez, Fresno Bee, December 25, 2003*

**T**he Central California Consortium (CCC) is a minority outreach and recruitment program in the San Joaquin Valley funded by the Forest Service. Since its inception in 1997, through the leadership of Forest Service employee Jim Oftedal, the CCC has placed more than 400 minorities and women both regionally and nationally. The focus of the program is to educate the underserved rural communities on natural resources. Currently, the program has established Hispanic and Asian components with African-American and Native-American programs planned for the near future.

When Jim Oftedal was put in charge of a program aimed at encouraging minority students to consider a career in the Forest Service, little did he know he would become a surrogate father, counselor, and motivator. But the affable 23-year Forest Service employee is all three and more.

This year, Oftedal was honored with the Unsung Hero award by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Chief’s New Century of Service award from the Forest Service.

Not bad for someone who grew up in southeast Fresno and admits to barely making it through high school.

But it has been Oftedal’s life experience that’s made him so effective as director of the CCC, a program that provides hands-on experience and training to kindergartners through college students and potentially a job for older students. Oftedal has done much of his work in the rural communities of Orange Cove and Reedley, where some students face many obstacles and few opportunities.

To date, 15 college graduates who participated in Oftedal’s program have received full-time jobs with the Forest Service or its sister agencies over 7 years, and nearly 90 students were hired for part-time summer jobs this year.

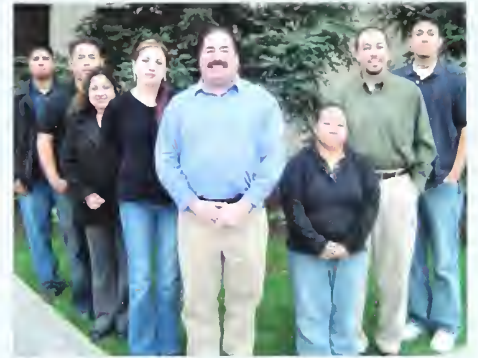
Nicknamed “Big Daddy,” Oftedal offers equal doses of tough love and encouraging words. And when it comes to giving children new opportunities, he’ll do whatever it takes. He’s visited numerous parents who were nervous about letting their children take an overnight trip or a summer job.

“I once took a whole family up to the forest just so that the mother and father could see where their daughter was going to work,” Oftedal says. “People trust me, and I don’t want to do anything to destroy that trust.”

With his big smile, bushy mustache, and ponytail, Oftedal quickly puts people at ease. Parents and school officials often call on him to help ring in students on the verge of dropping out or worse.

“His sincerity and depth of character are unmatched,” says Juan Garza, superintendent of the Kings Canyon Unified School District. “He is not just running a program, he is changing lives.”

For more information about the CCC, visit [http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sierra/cc\\_consortium/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sierra/cc_consortium/).



**The CCC staff consists of (from left to right): Victor Cardoza, Blong Vang, Nancy Pacheco, Lily Ramos, James Oftedal, Bao Vue, Robert Garcia, and Fabian Garcia.**

## *2003 National Fire Plan Award Winners*

**T**he National Fire Plan announced the recipients of the 2003 National Fire Plan Awards. Six individuals and six groups were recognized for their outstanding contributions in 2003 toward achieving the goals outlined in the National Fire Plan's 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and its corresponding Implementation Plan. From a pool of more than 100 nominations, the winners were selected by their peers for their dedication and hard work. The award winners were honored at the National Fire Plan Awards Ceremony on March 2, 2004, in Reno, NV, where they were recognized by Lynn Scarlett, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget for the U.S. Department of the Interior and Corbin Newman, National Fire Plan Coordinator for the Forest Service.

### **Excellence in Collaboration**

#### ***Individual Winner***

- Sue Stewart, Fire Ecologist, Central Oregon Fire Management District

#### ***Group Winner***

- Moffat County Fire and Fuel Management Plan, Moffat County, CO

#### ***Honorable Mention***

- Susan Marzec, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Utah State Office

#### ***Honorable Mention***

- Ozark National Scenic Riverways Fire Management Program

### **Excellence in Community Assistance**

#### ***Individual Winner***

- Ed Smith, Natural Resource Specialist, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

#### ***Group Winner***

- Pacific Northwest Interagency Community Assistance Grant Team

#### ***Honorable Mention***

- Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, Community Wildfire Planning

### **Excellence in Firefighter Preparedness, Safety, and Training**

#### ***Individual Winner***

- David Crary Jr., Fire Management Officer, Cape Cod National Seashore, National Park Service (NPS)

#### ***Group Winner***

- Indiana Interagency Coordination Center

#### ***Honorable Mention***

- Interagency Wildland Fire Leadership Committee

### ***Honorable Mention***

- Winnemucca Field Office and Wildfire Support Group, BLM, Nevada State Office

### ***Honorable Mention***

- Blue Ridge Parkway, NPS

### ***Honorable Mention***

- Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordination Group Contract Working Team

## **Excellence in Hazardous Fuels Treatment**

### ***Individual Winner***

- Richard Wolfe, Gateway Interagency Fire Front Liaison

### ***Group Winner***

- National Forests in Mississippi

### ***Honorable Mention***

- Gila National Forest

### ***Honorable Mention***

- Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Hazardous Fuels Program

## **Innovation in Biomass Utilization**

### ***Individual Winner***

- Phil Archuletta, CEO, P&M Plastics, Inc.

### ***Group Winner***

- Darby Fuels for Schools, Darby, MT

### ***Honorable Mention***

- Forest Energy Corporation

## **Excellence in Rehabilitation and Restoration**

### ***Individual Winner***

- Richard Schwab, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Interagency Fire Center

### ***Group Winner***

- Remote Sensing and Applications Center Burned Area Emergency Response Support Team

### ***Honorable Mention***

- Dr. Peter Robichaud, Rocky Mountain Research Station



**M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F**

*The Connection Among the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, the Healthy Forests Initiative, and the National Fire Plan*

**A**s we implement the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) and its provisions, we need to be clear about how it links to the Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) and the goals of the National Fire Plan (NFP). Almost 4 years ago, we set out as a Nation to maintain and restore our fire-adapted ecosystems through the NFP. The NFP gave us more of the resources we needed to meet that goal, and the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan helped us refine our framework for getting there. As we began implementation, many of the barriers plaguing our management emerged.

The HFI helped us tackle our gridlock of process impeding our restoration objective, including treatment of hazardous fuels. The HFI resulted in the development of a number of administrative tools and included a call for congressional help to further reduce procedural barriers. The result was the passage of the HFRA, which sent a strong message of bipartisan support for reducing fuels and restoring forest health, especially in the wildland-urban interface.

Within the HFI, the HFRA helped us streamline some of our processes and get more work done on the ground that will ultimately restore and maintain our fire-adapted ecosystems. It's what we set out to do 4 years ago under the NFP, and it's still our goal today. With these new provisions, I expect every one of us to stay focused on our overarching goal in implementing the NFP—to restore healthy, resilient fire-adapted ecosystems all across America.

*Dale N. Bosworth*  
Chief

*New National Incident Operations Driving Standards for 2004*

**T**he new National Wildfire Coordinating Group's 2004 driving standards for National Incident Operations have been released. Fatalities associated with driving during wildland fire suppression are a leading cause of fire-related deaths, and fatigue has been a contributing factor in many of them. The intent of these new incident operations driving standards is to reduce the incidence of driver fatigue. For all other nonincident driving, including for mobilization and demobilization, driving policies found in FSH 6709.11 Health and Safety Code Handbook, Chapter 12, shall be consulted.

These standards address driving by personnel actively engaged in wildland fire or "all-risk" response activities, including driving while assigned to a specific

incident or during initial attack fire response (includes time required to control the fire and travel to a rest location). In the absence of more restrictive agency policy, these guidelines will be followed during mobilization and demobilization as well. Individual agency driving policies shall be consulted for all other nonincident driving.

1. Agency resources assigned to an incident or engaged in initial attack fire response will adhere to the current agency work/rest policy for determining length of duty day.

2. No driver will drive more than 10 hours (behind the wheel) within any duty day.

3. Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty-day limitation provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of 10 hours.

4. A driver shall drive only if he or she has had at least 8 consecutive hours off duty before beginning a shift.

Exception to the minimum off-duty hour requirement is allowed when essential to (a) accomplish immediate and critical suppression objectives, or (b) address immediate and critical firefighter or public safety issues.

5. As stated in the current agency work/rest policy, documentation of mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue is required for drivers who exceed 16-hour work shifts. This is required regardless of whether the driver was still compliant with the 10-hour individual (behind the wheel) driving time limitations.

**A P R I L 1 6 , 2 0 0 4**

## *Forest Service Honors Engineers of the Year for 2003*

The Forest Service 2003 Engineer of the Year award luncheon was held in the Secretary's Dining Room in Washington, DC, on April 5, 2004. Director of Engineering Vaughn Stokes presented each winner with a special plaque and cash award. He commended the awardees for their outstanding contributions throughout their Forest Service careers. National Forest System Associate Deputy Gloria Manning welcomed the winners and applauded their achievements.

Congratulations to the following winners of the Forest Service Engineering awards for 2003. Each winner is pictured with Vaughn Stokes and Gloria Manning.

### ***William G. Schleining, Managerial Engineer of 2003***

Bill, who retired in January 2004, was the engineering/lands/recreation/heritage/minerals staff officer with the Black Hills National Forest in Custer, SD. He was honored for his dedication in helping coworkers rise to their full potential and for harnessing individuals' skills and abilities to develop an outstanding engineering program.



***William G. Schleining***





*Stephen D. Sichau*



*Joseph D. Fleming*



*Robert A. Gubernick*

### *Stephen D. Sichau, Technical Engineer of 2003*

Steve is the regional electrical engineer in Portland, OR. He was recognized for his leadership in recognizing, developing, and applying new ideas and technology in the realms of electrical design, operation, and maintenance, and water and wastewater systems.

### *Joseph D. Fleming, Engineering Technician of 2003*

Joe is a mechanical engineering technician for the San Dimas Technology and Development Center in San Dimas, CA. He was selected for his outstanding contributions in exceptional, innovative engineering project designs that are widely used in the ecosystem and resource management programs and throughout the Forest Service.

### *Robert A. Gubernick, Engineering Applications Employee of 2003*

Bob is an engineering geologist responsible for the Aquatic Organism Passage program for the Tongass National Forest in Petersburg, AK. He was honored for his design and application of state-of-the-art fish passage projects throughout the United States.

A P R I L 3 0 , 2 0 0 4

## *M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F* *2004 Fire Season Outlook*

**T**he fire season this year is expected to be near normal overall in terms of the number of fires and acres burned. It could get pretty severe, however, in much of the interior West, the Southwest, and southwest Alaska.

Large fire activity brings a lot of media attention to the issues and policies surrounding natural resource management. It also presents an opportunity for Forest Service employees to help people understand the importance of managing land conditions to protect forests and communities.

The National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Initiative, and Healthy Forests Restoration Act are helping us to get more work done on the ground. Ultimately, that will help us restore and maintain our fire-adapted ecosystems. I encourage you to talk with communities and local cooperators about where and how we can use these new tools to make a difference.

Also, please take every available opportunity this fire season to address the national fuels problem and explain how the Forest Service is expediting fuels reduction and forest restoration, especially in areas at high risk from uncharacteristically severe fires and insect outbreaks.

Thank you for your continued vigilance during fire season. Be safe out there.

*Dale N. Bosworth*  
Chief



## *Midewin Interagency Hotshot Fatality*

One firefighter was killed and another severely injured in an accident that occurred while the Midewin Interagency Hotshot Crew was en route to their home base after being released from a fire assignment in Florida. The Midewin Hotshots, based in Wilmington, IL, had been assigned to the East Fork Fire on the Apalachicola National Forest.

The accident occurred late Friday night, April 23, in West Memphis, AR. Al Toepke, 30, was killed, and Vance Hazelton, 30, was injured and remains in serious condition in Memphis, TN. Both men were from Winona, MN, and were employed by the Forest Service for the Midewin Hotshots based on the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Illinois.

The cause of the accident is under investigation by the local authorities and the Forest Service.

Al Toepke was serving his second season as a wildland firefighter on the Midewin Interagency Hotshot Crew. He had worked for the Forest Service previously in Ketchikan, AK, on the Tongass National Forest, followed by jobs with the Minnesota Conservation Corps, and as a general laborer in Montana.

Vance Hazelton is a crew squad boss and began his firefighting career in 1998 in Alaska, followed by positions in Wisconsin and North Carolina.

## *Employee Fatality on Coconino National Forest*

Coconino National Forest Fish Biologist David "Mark" Whitney, 53, died on April 27, 2004, from injuries sustained in a vehicle accident near Happy Jack, AZ. The cause of the accident is under investigation by the local authorities and the Forest Service. Whitney was the only occupant of the Forest Service 1998 Jeep Cherokee. He is survived by his wife, Darcie, of 30 years; children Chris (Shelley) Whitney and Corrie Jane Whitney, both of Flagstaff, AZ; and two granddaughters.

Whitney graduated from Wickenburg High School and attended Northern Arizona University where he met his wife. He graduated from Colorado State University in 1974 with a B.S. in Zoology.

Mark's Forest Service career started in 1973 on the Heber District of the Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona as a firefighter with the Sitgreaves Hotshot Crew. In 1978, he moved into a position as a wildlife biologist on the Chevelon District of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. His career as a wildlife biologist led to the Glenwood District of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico in 1983, then to the Long Valley District of the Coconino National Forest in 1990. Mark's tenure as the Fish Biologist on the Coconino National Forest started in 1998.

Of Mark's professional accomplishments, he was most proud of his work with restoration of natural flows and native fish in Fossil Creek, a unique water in the Southwest. He enjoyed sharing his professional expertise with Sinagua High Environmental Science students during their annual research field trip to study Fossil Creek.



*Mark Whitney*

## *Liberty and Freedom Totem Poles*

**T**he Lummi Indian Nation, in cooperation with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in Washington, harvested two large western red cedar trees April 7, 2004, from along the Baker Lake Highway of the Mt. Baker Ranger District. From these cedar trees, the Lummi Nation's House of Tears Carvers will create the Liberty and Freedom Totem Poles, which will be dedicated September 19, 2004, during a formal ceremony at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. The ceremony will commemorate the victims of the 9-11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, as well as to honor past and present members of the United States Armed Forces.

The trees are hundreds of years old, about 190 feet tall, and more than 6 feet in diameter at the base. "It is an honor to be a partner with the Lummi Indian Nation in these important memorials," said Jon Vanderheyden, District Ranger for the Mt. Baker Ranger District. "Because the trees were identified as hazard trees, posing danger to traffic and public safety, this is a great opportunity to be able to assist the Lummi Indian Nation while also removing a safety hazard."

Under the expertise of master carver Jewell "Praying Wolf" James, the cedar trees will be transformed into two, 13-foot-high totem poles, each carved in the figure of bears, and connected by a 34-foot crossbeam carved with eagles, the moon, and sun designs. Using a flatbed trailer, the Lummi Indian Nation will transport the poles across the United States, where they will be blessed in a traditional manner by Native American communities in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and North Carolina, before arriving for the September dedication in Washington, DC.

The Lummi Indian Nation has been engaged in this 9-11 commemoration effort since 2002, when it carved and placed the first Healing Pole at Arrow Park in the Sterling Forest in New York State, an hour north of Manhattan, to help bring healing to the families and friends of those who perished at the World Trade Center. The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest previously partnered with the Lummi Indian Nation last year to provide the carving wood for the Honoring Pole, which was placed in Shanksville, PA, at the site of the 9-11 crash of United Flight 93.

"The placement of the Liberty and Freedom poles in Washington, DC, this year will complete our efforts to bring both healing to the American Nation and to bring attention to the dedication and sacrifices of past and present members of the United States Armed Forces," said James. Lummi Chairman Darrell Hillaire added that, "We are trying to honor our veterans as best we can. This is important to us since significant numbers of Natives have and continue to serve in the Armed Forces with honor and dignity."



## *Large Airtanker Contract Canceled*

The Forest Service and the Department of the Interior announced on May 10, 2004, that they are terminating the contract for 33 large airtankers because of concerns over the airworthiness of the aircraft and public safety. The decision came in response to findings and recommendations contained in the April 23, 2004, National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) report on three previous airtanker accidents. The NTSB found that no method is currently in place to adequately ensure the safety and airworthiness of the aircraft. Without a solid determination of airworthiness, these older aircraft pose an unacceptable risk to contract aviators, firefighters, and the public. "It is important to recognize the contributions that these companies and pilots have made and we regret that we had to make this decision," said Assistant Director of Aviation Tony Kern. "While we will be missing 33 large airtankers, we will still have 400 aircraft remaining in our firefighting inventory and will very much be engaged in aerial firefighting this year." For more information, visit [http://www.nifc.gov/nr\\_airtanker-contracts.html](http://www.nifc.gov/nr_airtanker-contracts.html).

## *Forest Service Employee Dies on Mailbox Fire*

On Thursday, May 13, 2004, Randy Henderson, 42, a Forest Service firefighter, died while working on a lightning-caused wildfire on the Osceola National Forest. The 100-acre Mailbox Fire was contained later that evening. Henderson collapsed on the fire line during initial response to the fire. Henderson had been detailed to the Osceola National Forest as acting Fire Management Officer for only three weeks from his permanent duty station in Mississippi.

"Randy's entire Ranger District is saddened and in shock. He will certainly be missed by all. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family," said Dave Carter, District Ranger on the Bienville National Forest. Henderson served as the Assistant Fire Management Officer on the Bienville National Forest in Forest, MS, and spent his entire Forest Service career, approximately 23 years, on that forest.

Henderson is survived by his wife, Patsy; two daughters, Nicki, 19, and Stacy, 14; his mother, Bobbie Nell; sister, Wanda Henderson; and brother, Lambert Henderson. Randy and Lambert worked together as employees of the Bienville National Forest.

Marsha Kearney, Forest Supervisor for the National Forests in Florida, said, "Randy is a member of our Forest Service 'family,' and will be deeply missed. Our sincere condolences go to his family and friends."



**Randy Henderson**



## *Airtanker Update*

The Forest Service is actively pursuing additional aviation resources to replace lost retardant capacity due to the recent termination of contracts for 33 airtankers. In the short term, helicopters, single-engine airtankers, and the military will be called upon to make up the shortfall. Two military C-130 MAFFS units have recently been activated and are currently operating in Arizona and New Mexico. Long term, the Forest Service is looking for opportunities to modernize their fleet. In addition, the Federal Aviation Administration has offered to provide the Forest Service with technical assistance to determine if any of the grounded airtankers could safely be returned to service. In all cases the Forest Service is committed to replacement aircraft that will provide the level of safety recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board in their findings and recommendations of April 23, 2004. For more information, visit [http://www.nifc.gov/nr\\_airtanker-contracts.html](http://www.nifc.gov/nr_airtanker-contracts.html).

## *15-Passenger Van Safety*

Following a number of serious vehicle accidents resulting in fatalities involving 15-passenger vans, the Forest Service issued a new interim directive, FSH 6709.11-2004-1, which deals with how to safely operate a 15-passenger van.

### *Transporting Passengers*

Drivers operating vehicles designed to transport more than 16 passengers (including the driver) must have a Commercial Driver's License and a Forest Service endorsement. Drivers operating 15-passenger vans must have validation stated on the driver's identification.

Transport vehicles shall be equipped with the following items:

- The rear seat of 15-passenger vans will be removed to create a small screened area for cargo. Maximum weight in this area must not cause the van to exceed the gross vehicle rating or payload rating. This modification must meet the requirements of Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 567.
- The use of roof racks on 15-passenger vans must be limited to carrying light loads not more than 60 pounds (for example, ladder rack, survey poles, rowing oars, and so forth).

### *Qualifications*

1. The supervisor or Job Corps Center Field Office Director shall ensure that a job hazard analysis is prepared for all projects or activities using 15-passenger vans and that operators possess the skills required for operating the vehicle.
2. Only qualified and authorized employees shall operate 15-passenger vans.

3. Operators shall receive training, an operational test, and a written test targeting the requirements of operating specialized equipment. The driver's ID must state 15-passenger van.
4. All 15-passenger vans will carry a maximum of 10 persons, including the driver.
5. The 15-passenger van may not be procured as additions or replacements to the fleet for Job Corp Centers. Transportation needs for Job Corp Centers will be met by procuring smaller passenger vans or larger passenger buses.
6. Operators are responsible for carrying out vehicle inspections before, during, and after use.

For more information, reference FSH 6709.11 Health and Safety Code Handbook, Chapter 10.

J U N E 1 1 , 2 0 0 4

## M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F

### *Chief's Awards: Reconnecting With the Field*

The annual Chief's awards program is a chance to recognize our people for their outstanding contributions to the agency and to our mission. By acknowledging what we see as major accomplishments, these awards send a powerful signal out to the field and to the public about what our mission is and what we're trying to accomplish.

When I first became Forest Service Chief, I saw some disconnects between what was going on in the Washington Office and what we were doing out in the field. The Chief's awards can help us reconnect with the field, and that's why we've been making some changes to them.

Last year, we reduced award categories to better reflect our corporate values and strategic plan. This year, we included specific strategic plan objectives in the nomination criteria for the awards; for example, the Chief's Natural Resource Stewardship award. This year's Chief's awards send the message that our focus today is on ecological restoration on all of the Nation's forests and grasslands—and internationally as well.

The people honored with a Chief's award accomplished something significant that furthered our strategic objectives. The Forest Service recipients of the Secretary's Honor Awards should also be recognized for their outstanding accomplishments. Congratulations to all of the award winners.

Dale N. Bosworth  
Chief

## *2004 Chief's Awards*

**T**he Chief's awards were established to recognize Forest Service employees for their outstanding accomplishments and contributions that further the mission of the Forest Service. They are the most prestigious awards granted in the agency. The award winners are listed below.

### **Natural Resource Stewardship Award**

*Hayman Fire Restoration Team, Region 2*

For restoration and rehabilitation of the Hayman Fire area.

### **Global Stewardship Award**

*Dr. Alex Moad, Washington Office, International Programs*

For contributing significantly to the international mission of the Forest Service.

### **Distinguished Science Award**

*Dr. Chung Yun Hse, Southern Research Station*

For successful conceptualization, development, and execution of a research program marked by innovation, productivity, and international collaborations.

### **Early Career Scientist Award**

*Dr. Michael K. Schwartz, Rocky Mountain Research Station*

For exemplary professionalism in the field of wildlife genetics and ecology.

### **Technology Transfer Award (Internal)**

*Remote Sensing Applications Center Burned Area Emergency Response Support Program, WO Detached, Engineering*

For excellent support of the Burned Area Emergency Response program through the development and integration of remote sensing technologies for post-fire mapping and analysis.

### **Technology Transfer Award (External)**

*The Open Accessible Space Information System (OASIS), New York City*

For creating OASIS NYC, the first and most comprehensive urban and community forestry mapping and information resource in New York City.

### **New Century of Service Award**

*Dr. Robert E. Buckman, Pacific Northwest Research Station*

In recognition of 50 years of leadership and service to the Forest Service.

### *The Fiddlin' Foresters, Region 2*

For artfully blending the timeless oral tradition of music with the modern interpretive technology in presenting the essence of the Forest Service mission and culture to thousands of employees and public audiences.



### **Natural Resource Leadership Award**

*Donald L. Meyer, Region 9*

For leadership in the process to set remediation goals to protect the health of natural resources and the public at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

### **Volunteers Program National Award**

*Stanislaus Wilderness Volunteers, Region 5*

For devoting thousands of hours to the restoration and protection of wilderness on the Stanislaus National Forest through education, example, maintenance, and restoration.

### **Partnership Award**

*Upper Joseph Creek Community Planning Team (Oregon and Idaho)*

For innovation and excellence in collaborative watershed assessment, management and implementation to address catastrophic wildland fire, forest health, off-highway-vehicle use and access management, and noxious invasive species.

### **Multicultural Organization Award**

*Teresa Cordova, Washington Office Detached, Civil Rights*

In recognition of commitment to ensuring the Forest Service continues to strive toward a diverse workforce.

### **Safety and Occupational Health Award**

*Kenneth Kaufman, Region 1*

For outstanding accomplishments in the areas of safety and occupational health.

### **Excellence in Budget and Financial Accountability Award**

*Financial Resources Audit Team, Region 4*

For efficient and accurate reviews of fiscal year 2003 audit documentation.

### **Excellence in Providing Business Operations Support Award**

*Columbia Shuttle Financial Incident Team, Region 8*

For developing procedures and implementing a process to record obligations into the Foundation Financial Information System.

### **Gridlock Breaking Award**

*Stephen J. Solem, Region 4*

For outstanding leadership in implementing process improvements in the Intermountain Region.



*Albuquerque Service Center.*

## *Location Selected for New Financial Management Operations Center*

**A**lbuquerque, NM, has been selected as the site for the new operations center to handle centralized financial management functions for the Forest Service. The team that studied options for the center included criteria such as quality of life, workforce availability, living costs, community diversity, accessibility to health care and recreation, dual career opportunities, and the interest of the community in having a center.

The next phase is to seek an appropriate facility to house the center and have the facility designed to meet our needs. Later phases will include a discussion about functions that will transfer to the center and the timing of those moves. "We recognize that our employees are eager to learn as much as possible so that they can determine the effects upon their careers and make personal decisions based on that information. We will share additional information as soon as possible," said Chris Pyron, Deputy Chief for Business Operations.

## *2004 Secretary's Honor Awards*

### **Forest Service Winners**

**A** ceremony was held on June 25, 2004, in Washington, DC, to recognize the recipients of the Secretary of Agriculture's Honor Awards. The Secretary's Annual Honor Awards are the most prestigious awards given at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The purpose of the Honor Awards is to provide high-level recognition to deserving USDA employees at all grade levels and private citizens who have made outstanding contributions supporting USDA's mission. The following is a list of Forest Service recipients.

### **Protecting and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment**

#### ***Hayman Fire Restoration Team, Region 2***

For exceptional service while working with county and State road departments in facilitating 145 miles of road reconstruction and maintenance, and the removal of hazardous trees from more than 717 miles of motorized road and trail ways.

#### ***Robbie Baird LeValley, Colorado State University***

For extraordinary accomplishments in developing and implementing a rangeland management education program that resulted in improved range and watershed conditions during the past decade.

### **Supporting the President's Management Agenda and Civil Rights** ***Jane D. Kohlman, Forest Products Laboratory***

For contributions in program development and implementation in attracting target-group students into research careers and careers in Forest Service research.



***Thomas J. Mills, Retired***

For directing management improvement within the Forest Service and outstanding leadership in civil rights that resulted in a 28-percent decrease in formal complaints.

**Heroism and Emergency Response**

***David E. Buck and Edward J. Burton, Region 9***

For providing immediate emergency assistance to Glen Pittsenbarger, who was unable to swim to safety after a boating accident on Summit Lake.

***Mary Kennedy, Montana Conservation Corps***

For providing emergency assistance to a fellow crewmember who was overwhelmed with flames resulting from a white gas explosion.

***Space Shuttle-107 Columbia Recovery Mission Group, Region 8***

For exceptional effort and dedication to recovery of all of the fallen crew members of Space Shuttle-107 Columbia, and for aiding in determining the cause of the catastrophe by locating the black box and other important parts of the spacecraft.

***Mountain Area Safety Task Force, San Bernardino, CA, Region 5***

For exceptional vision, commitment, and service for overall public safety through establishment of the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce.

***Highway 18 Defense Group, Region 5***

For outstanding and courageous response of the Highway 18 Defense Group to the horrific Old Fire incident, saving thousands of homes and billions of dollars in infrastructure around Lake Arrowhead from destruction.

***Afghanistan and Iraq Agriculture Reconstruction Team, Foreign Agriculture Service, Washington, DC***

***Forest Service Group Member: John Vozzo***

For outstanding support to the USDA initiatives in reconstructing the agricultural sectors of Afghanistan and Iraq, resulting in the noticeable rehabilitation of the agriculture and related environmental areas of both nations.

**Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Agricultural Producers**

***Ministerial Conference and EXPO on Agricultural Science and Technology, Foreign Agricultural Service, Washington, DC***

***Forest Service Group Member: John Parrotta***

For outstanding management and logistical oversight of the complex, high-profile, and politically sensitive task of implementing a global-scale ministerial conference on agricultural science and technology.



## M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F

### *Partnership With the National Forest Foundation*

I would like to reintroduce you all to the National Forest Foundation (NFF) established in 1990 by Congress. They are one of the most important non-profit partners of the Forest Service.

Historically, the Forest Service has relied on traditional methods to engage the American public. It is my intention to find creative ways to communicate with the public about their national forests. We entered into partnership with the foundation to meet the challenges of this difficult task.

Nearly a year ago, the NFF asked us what, in addition to their ongoing programs, they could do on behalf of the Forest Service and national forests. After some thought, we asked for their assistance in outreach. NFF responded by developing the Friends of the Forest™ initiative. I am excited about this opportunity and the rollout of the Region 6 pilot this week.

I encourage you to log on to <http://www.nationalforestfoundation.org> and <http://www.becomeafriend.org> to learn more about this important effort. It is one that has the potential of reconnecting the American public with their public land and reconnecting us with the American public.

*Dale N. Bosworth*  
Chief

### *Canada Lynx Den Found on Superior National Forest*

As the result of a joint study, a team of biologists has located what may be the first Canada lynx den ever documented in Minnesota. Listing of Canada lynx as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 2000 spurred a need for more information about the Canada lynx in Minnesota.

A January 2002 study by the Forest Service confirmed the presence of lynx in the Superior National Forest, and more intensive lynx studies began. During the 2003–04 winter, the Natural Resources Research Institute at the University of Minnesota Duluth joined the Forest Service in a joint effort to establish where and how far the lynx range is in Minnesota.

During the 2003–04 winter, agency biologists used a combination of radio and global positioning system tracking systems on captured and released lynx to confirm that Minnesota is an established part of the Canada lynx range. Biologists want to know much more, however, about lynx distribution, residency, population density, dispersal, and survival.

A visit to the den of female lynx “L07,” one of 13 lynx being tracked in the radiotelemetry study, turned up three healthy kittens. The kittens were measured, weighed, and fitted with a small ear tag.



*The lynx kittens are believed to be the offspring of two radiocollared adults living 35 miles apart.*

Canada lynx had been presumed scarce in Minnesota since 1984, and were listed as a threatened species in 2000 under the Endangered Species Act.

Scientists think that another radiocollared lynx, "L05," located about 35 miles northwest of the den site in early June, is the father of these kittens. L05 was originally captured and fitted with a collar near Brule Lake in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in 2003.

L05 has ranged from Grand Marais to Two Harbors, survived being caught in a trapper's snare, and then spent several weeks with L07 this winter. Blood and hair samples collected for DNA analysis may confirm whether L05 fathered these kittens. Finding a den with kittens is a milestone in the study because it documents that Canada lynx are reproducing on the Superior National Forest.

J U L Y 9 , 2 0 0 4

## *Draft Policy Released on Off-highway Vehicle Use in National Forests and Grasslands*

**O**n July 7, 2004, the Forest Service released its proposal for managing motorized off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in national forests and grasslands, which will enhance recreational opportunities for the public and better protect the environment by requiring units to establish a designated system of roads, trails, and areas.

"OHVs are a great way to experience the national forests, but because their popularity has increased in recent years, we need an approach that will sustain natural resource values through more effective management of motor vehicle use. The benefits of improving OHV use include enhanced protection of habitat and aquatic, soil, air, and cultural resources," said Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth. "The Forest Service wants to improve its management by balancing the public's enjoyment of using OHVs with ensuring the best possible care of the land."

In 2002, national forests and grasslands had more than 214 million visits. Nationally, the number of OHV users climbed sevenfold in the past 30 years, from 5 million in 1972 to 36 million in 2000. OHV users account for about 1.8 million, or 5 percent, of visitors to national forests and grasslands. Currently, each of the 155 national forests and 21 grasslands has guidelines regarding OHV use, with some national forests managing use on a designated system of roads, trails, and areas, while others do not. As a result, the Forest Service does not have a clear, consistent policy regarding motor vehicle use on national forests and grasslands.

The proposed rule represents a nationally consistent approach to travel management by requiring each forest and grassland to designate a system of roads, trails, and areas slated for motor vehicle use. It will allow national forests to denote use of routes and areas by vehicle type and, if appropriate, by time of year. Once the designation process is complete, OHV use would be confined to designated routes and areas, and OHV use off these routes (cross-country travel)



would be prohibited. Snowmobile use would continue to be managed as it is currently—allowed, restricted, or prohibited on roads and trails and in areas on National Forest System (NFS) lands.

“While some forests have begun to designate roads, trails, and areas for OHVs, I expect units to make significant progress in improving management of OHVs in the next 2 years,” said Bosworth. “We want to improve our management of outdoor recreation by having a system of routes and areas offering the best opportunities for OHV use while still meeting our responsibility to sustain NFS lands and resources.”

The proposed rule calls for the Forest Service to continue to engage with motorized sports enthusiasts, conservationists, State agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and others to identify routes offering the best opportunities for OHV use while still meeting its responsibility to protect the environment. The public would continue to be allowed to participate in the process of designating roads, trails, and areas or revising designations and would continue to receive advance notice to allow for public comment on proposed or revised designations.

### *Presidential Rank Award Recipients*

Each year, the President recognizes and celebrates a small group of career senior executives with the President's Rank Award for exceptional long-term accomplishments. Winners of this prestigious award are strong leaders, professionals, and scientists who achieve results and consistently demonstrate strength, integrity, industry, and a relentless commitment to excellence in public service.

#### **Congratulations to the following Forest Service recipients:**

##### ***Dale N. Bosworth***

For outstanding leadership as Chief Forester and the former regional forester in two regions.

##### ***Robert T. Jacobs***

For continued exemplary performance as a field line officer and excelling in two Forest Service regions.

##### ***Thomas J. Mills (retired)***

For visionary and effective leadership of key Forest Service programs, excelling in areas from leadership in developing the Forest Service's strategic plan to designing of budget processes that reflected strategic priorities in funding requests and allocation.



## *James Bedwell Honored by American Society of Landscape Architects*

James S. Bedwell, American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), of the Forest Service, was selected to receive the LaGasse Medal in the Landscape Architect Category for his leadership in management and conservancy of natural resources and public lands. The LaGasse Medals are named in honor of the late Alfred B. LaGasse, a former executive vice president of ASLA who championed proper management of the Nation's public lands and natural resources. The LaGasse Medal recognizes individuals who have made notable contributions to the management and conservancy of natural resources and/or public lands. Nominees in the Landscape Architect Category must be landscape architects or hold a degree in landscape architecture and possess a minimum of 10 years experience in the profession.

Mr. Bedwell began his career with the Forest Service in 1979 and served in landscape architecture and recreation management positions in Tucson, AZ; Santa Fe, NM; and San Juan, PR prior to becoming Forest Service Chief Landscape Architect from 1996 through 2000. In that role, he was hailed for his leadership in outdoor recreation accessibility, scenic byways, scenery management, and the timely delivery of tools and resources to more than 300 landscape architects who work for the Forest Service. Of specific note was his leadership in the development of the Forest Service's Built Environment Image Guide, the first national design guide for the agency since the Civilian Conservation Corp in the 1930s. He is currently Forest Supervisor for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland in Northeast Colorado.

## *Bush Bestows Preserve America Award on Kootenai's Raven Ranger Station*

*By Becky Timmons, Kootenai National Forest, and Lennie Eav, Washington Office, Office of Communication*

Out of 107 contenders, the Historic Raven Natural Resource Learning Center in the Kootenai National Forest in Libby, MT, received one of four Preserve America Presidential Awards for 2004. The awards were recently presented at a ceremony in the Oval Office and celebrated at a dinner in the White House hosted by President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush.

Later, Chief Dale Bosworth conferred on Becky Timmons, manager of the Kootenai Forest Heritage Program, the first national Program Award for Excellence.

The Raven Ranger Station started out as a supply station to the newly formed Forest Service in 1906. It remained unoccupied for more than 20 years until adopted by the Communities for a Great Northwest as a learning center in 1997. Today, it is home to "Provider Pals," a student exchange program that brings hundreds or urban youths to Raven each year.



*Ceremony to receive the Preserve America Award at the Oval Office in Washington, DC. Left to Right: President George W. Bush; Executive Director of Provider Pals Bruce Vincent; Kootenai Forest Supervisor Bob Castaneda; and First Lady Laura Bush.*

Revitalization of Raven exemplifies the dynamic energy that comes from public-private partnerships, which in the case of Raven involved hundreds of volunteers and thousands of hours. The Northern Region's historic preservation team, along with 30 partners, including onsite preservation coordinator Colleen Snyder of the Communities for a Great Northwest, Montana State Historic Preservation Team architect Pete Brown, and Kootenai's Becky Timmons, pitched in to bring Raven back on its feet. They raised more than \$1.9 million in grants and contributions from local companies, the Lincoln County Commission, and the Forest Service to make the Raven learning center possible.

## *Color Country Wins Prestigious Pulaski Award*

On June 2, 2004, the Dixie National Forest and its partners in the Color Country Interagency Fire Management Area proudly accepted the prestigious Pulaski Award for 2004 at a ceremony in Cedar City, UT. Color Country earned the award for its achievements in interagency cooperation and coordination in managing wildland fire. The award was presented by Tom Boatner of the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, ID.

The Pulaski Award recognizes outstanding contributions to wildland firefighting and America's wildland firefighters. Presented annually by the NIFC, this national award from the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior recognizes groups, not individuals. Color Country, a multiagency partnership that covers 14 million acres in southwestern Utah and northwestern Arizona, has long been recognized as a leader in using an interagency approach to managing wildland fire.

Color Country includes lands administered by the Dixie National Forest, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the State of Utah, Arizona State Trust, and several Indian reservations. It covers five counties in Utah and two in Arizona.

In the early 1990s, fire managers from Federal and State agencies in Color Country started working cooperatively in fire suppression, training, and other wildland fire projects. Finding that working together was more effective and cost efficient, the agencies joined formally to create the Color Country Interagency Fire Management Area.

This group's mission is to promote safe and effective fire management through interagency cooperation. Because many wildland fires are of a multi-jurisdictional nature, interagency cooperation provides an ideal background for cohesive consideration of ecological, social, political, and economic aspects of fire management.

The Pulaski Award is a 30-inch bronze statue of a wildland firefighter created by Larry Noland. The award is named after young forest ranger Ed Pulaski who led his crew through thick smoke, intense heat, and a raging inferno driven by hurricane-force winds to the safety of a mining tunnel during the Montana/Idaho inferno of 1910. Also named for this ranger is a half axe/half hoe firefighting tool that he helped develop. The Pulaski award was first given in 1998.



*Pulaski award*



## *Veneman Acts To Conserve Roadless Areas in National Forests*

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced on July 12, 2004, the reinstatement of an interim directive to conserve roadless areas and proposed a new rule that continues the cooperative conservation of roadless areas in national forests and grasslands. The new rule sets a new, straightforward collaborative path to conserving roadless areas by working with the States on State-specific regulations.

“Our actions today advance President Bush’s commitment to cooperatively conserving roadless areas on national forests,” Veneman said. “The prospect of endless lawsuits represents neither progress, nor certainty for communities. Our announcements today illustrate our commitment to working closely with the Nation’s governors to meet the needs of local communities, and to maintaining the undeveloped character of the most pristine areas of the National Forest System (NFS).”

The previous administration finalized its roadless rule in January 2001. Since then it has been the target of litigation in Alaska, Idaho, Utah, North Dakota, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia. In June 2003, a Federal court struck down the 2001 roadless rule, concluding that it violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the Wilderness Act.

Secretary Veneman said that the Forest Service would reinstate an interim directive to conserve roadless areas that were afforded protection by the 2001 rule. Even though the Forest Service has not moved to develop these areas, they have not been under a national rule since the District Court for the District of Wyoming permanently enjoined implementation of the 2001 rule in July 2003. The interim directive will remain in effect for a period of 18 months after the finalization of a new roadless rule being proposed today.

The proposed rule establishes a process for governors to work with the Forest Service to develop locally supported rules for conserving roadless areas in their States. While 39 States have “inventoried” roadless areas on NFS lands within their boundaries, just 12 States contain 56.6 million acres, or 97 percent, of all roadless areas in the country (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming).

The new proposal would offer the governors the opportunity to work with U.S. Department of Agriculture on collaborative State-specific rulemakings for the conservation and management of roadless areas. Petitions would identify areas for inclusion and ways to protect public health and safety; reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical wildlife habitat; maintain critical infrastructure, such as dams and utilities; and assure citizens access to private property.

Once the State finished its petition process, the Forest Service would publish a subsequent rulemaking for inventoried roadless areas within a petitioning State. Each State-specific rulemaking will include the required National Environmental Policy Act analysis and input from the public during the notice and comment period. Petitions would have to be submitted within 18 months of the effective date of a final rule.



Separately, Veneman also proposed establishing a national advisory committee to provide expert consultation for implementing the State-specific petition rule-making process. Members of the committee would include experts in fish and wildlife biology, fish and wildlife management, forest management, outdoor recreation, and other relevant disciplines.

For more information on roadless areas and the rule to conserve roadless areas, please visit <http://roadless.fs.fed.us>.

A U G U S T 6 , 2 0 0 4

## *Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers Celebrate 40th Anniversary*

**T**he Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers (JCCCC), in coordination with the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Reclamation, will celebrate their 40th anniversary from September 10–12, 2004.

The main activities will be at the Schenck JCCCC in Pisgah, NC, on September 12, 2004. Several presentations will be made by dignitaries from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of the Interior (DOI), Department of Labor, Congress, community, and Community Relations Councils. Center directors, retirees, student alumni, and others who have had major positive impacts on the Job Corps Program will be recognized for their notable efforts. The events to celebrate the 40th anniversary will include many fun-filled activities for Job Corps students and members of the student government visiting from other centers.

The Job Corps Program was established on August 20, 1964, as a pilot program under President Lyndon B. Johnson's war on poverty programs. The pilot program for Job Corps was to last for only 5 years.

The objective of President Lyndon B. Johnson's proposed Job Corps Program was to provide young men from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to gain a blend of training, basic education, and work experience.

During the course of the first year, 88 JCCCCs were opened. Of those centers, 41 were DOI and 47 were USDA. The first Forest Service center was the Lyndon B. Johnson Civilian Conservation Center, initially named Arrowood, located in Franklin, NC.

Under the Nixon administration, many of the JCCCCs were closed. The Job Corps program as a whole, however, has grown in numbers and complexity. Currently 119 JCCCCs operate across the Nation. The centers located on National Forest System land are very successful and are exceeding the Department of Labor's performance requirements.

## *Healthy Forests Accomplishments*

**O**n December 3, 2003, President George W. Bush signed the historic and bipartisan Healthy Forests Restoration Act into law. The Forest Service, together with its partners, is making progress in implementing this important legislation to reduce the threat of wildland fire to communities and the environment, and improve the health of our Nation's forests. By August 1, 2004, the Forest Service completed treatments to improve vegetative condition class on 1.9 million acres. Of the treated acres, 1.6 million were hazardous fuels reduction projects, which was 100 percent of the annual goal for this type of vegetative treatment. More than 66 percent of the hazardous fuels reduction projects were in the wildland-urban interface adjacent to communities.

### *MEO Wins Forest Service Information Technology Bid*

*By Bobbie Mixon Jr., Washington Office, Office of Communication*

**T**he Forest Service's first national, fully competitive sourcing study resulted in selection of its internally redesigned information technology (IT) organization to perform agency IT infrastructure work. The decision was announced July 27, 2004, by Chris Pyron, the agency's source selection official and deputy chief of Business Operations.

The announcement came after nearly 17 months of study, analysis, and weighing contract bids from public and private vendors that hoped to gain a contract valued at \$295,123,480. The contract went to the Forest Service's redesign along with four 1-year contract extensions. It covers only the IT work studied.

"The selection of the agency redesign represents an evolution of Forest Service IT services into an enterprise-wide organization that will be driven by efficiency, customer satisfaction, and consistent service across the agency," said Pyron after the announcement.

The Forest Service redesigned its IT infrastructure organization into something called a "Most Efficient Organization" (MEO) to bid on the work. The MEO was chosen as the best value to the government, based not only on cost but also on other factors including technical approach, past performance, management aspects, and small-business subcontracting considerations. The enterprise-wide MEO has a new name, the Information Solutions Organization or ISO.

The IT study included all tasks related to specific IT functions. Those tasks are currently performed by employees occupying about 1,200 full-time equivalent positions. In all, more than 2,500 individuals in the Forest Service conduct some of the following aspects of this work under study:

- IT management.
- IT infrastructure design, integration, testing, and delivery.
- Security and information assurance.
- Enterprise network, radio, voice, and video communications.
- Server support.

- Desktop support.
- Electronic messaging and groupware.
- Data base management.
- National Interagency Fire Center incident communications support.
- All-risk incident support.

The study was conducted in response to the President's Management Agenda, which aims to improve government performance and efficiency through the increased use of public-private competitions.

A U G U S T 2 0 , 2 0 0 4

## *Federal Firefighting Agencies Return Two Additional Large Airtankers to Service*

**O**n August 12, 2004, the Departments of the Interior (DOI) and Agriculture (USDA) announced that they would return two P-2V aircraft to firefighting service on a limited basis. Both aircraft would be outfitted with structural health monitoring devices to gather information on the stresses that occur to airtankers in the fire environment, which will help determine vital safety information for the remaining P-2V fleet.

"This is another step in developing a clearer picture of the airworthiness of these aging aircraft," said Rebecca Watson, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management at DOI. "We are going to ensure the safety of these aircraft while redoubling our ongoing efforts to protect communities from wild-fire."

"Safety is a top priority and a core value of our firefighting program," said Mark Rey, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment at USDA. "With our current fleet of aircraft, including single-engine tankers, helicopters, and other resources, fire managers continue our success rate of stopping over 99 percent of fires upon initial attack."

Minden Air Corporation of Minden, NV, owns one of the P-2V and Neptune Aviation of Missoula, MT, owns the other aircraft. The aircraft would only be used in unpopulated areas and be subject to more frequent inspections. This technique is similar to the Federal Aviation Authority's experimental-use certification, which is used by FAA to reconcile uncertainties in airplanes.

The two airtankers joined seven P-3 Orion aircraft that were returned to service following a thorough safety analysis. The remaining 10 aircraft in the P-2V fleet were not returned to service at that time because, unlike the P-3 aircraft, the operational service life, which is expressed in how many hours an aircraft can be safely flown according to the original equipment manufacturer, was not established. USDA, however, contracted with Lockheed-Martin, the original manufacturer of the P-2Vs, to obtain historical data on the aircraft to help make that determination.



On June 9, 2004, USDA contracted with DynCorp Technical Services, a Texas-based aviation engineering firm, to provide the expertise in analyzing the airworthiness documentation provided by contractors for the large airtankers. USDA and DOI relied on DynCorp's analysis of that documentation to make the decision to return the two P-2Vs with monitoring devices to service.

Sandia National Laboratories Aging Aircraft Program collected and transmitted the data from the monitoring devices to Lockheed-Martin engineers who used the data in helping to determine an operational service life. Data from a DC-7 owned by TBM Butler Aviation and used by the State of Oregon in firefighting operations was also collected from its monitoring device and studied.

In May 2004, USDA and DOI terminated the contracts for 33 large airtankers to be used in firefighting missions because of concerns over the airworthiness of the aircraft, and firefighter and public safety. The decision was based on safety recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board issued in April after its investigation into three fatal airtanker crashes related to inflight structural failures.

### *Fatal Helicopter Crash*

**O**n August 11, 2004, Mike Ward, 55, of Clayton, GA, was killed when the helicopter he was piloting crashed on the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests in Washington. Ward was ferrying firefighting equipment to a small lightning-caused fire located in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area of the Leavenworth Ranger District. Ward was an employee with Helicopter Express of Lawrenceville, GA. The cause of the crash was investigated by the Forest Service and the National Transportation Safety Board. Condolences go out to his friends and family.

### *Forums Kick Off Centennial Celebration*

**T**he Centennial Countdown begins in earnest this month. Just 4 months from the start of the Forest Service's centennial year in 2005, the agency kicks off commemoration of its 100th anniversary with international flair. On August 25, 2004, the International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) will host the first of 12 national Centennial Forums in Caguas, PR. The forums are being held in all regions of the country in preparation for the national Centennial Congress being held in Washington, DC, January 3-6, 2005. Nearly 500 delegates will have been chosen to attend the Centennial Congress by the time the forums are completed in late November. Centennial Forums will take place in the following locations.

## **International Institute of Tropical Forestry Forum**

**August 25-26, 2004**

**Caguas, Puerto Rico**

IITF's forum will showcase Forest Service activities in tropical forestry and seek input regarding emerging tropical forestry issues.

## **Pacific Southwest Region Forum**

**November 5-6, 2004**

**Sacramento, CA**

This forum will examine emerging issues throughout the Pacific Southwest Region, in part, focusing on a national-level discussion about Forest Service watershed management efforts the past century and the continuing role they play in providing clean water to the nation.

## **Southern Region and Southern Research Station Forum**

**November 8-10, 2004**

**Asheville, NC**

This forum will bring together resource managers, scientists, advocates, and partners to evaluate how management and research accomplishments to date can help us meet the challenges of tomorrow.

## **Rocky Mountain Region & Rocky Mountain Research Station Centennial Forum**

**November 8-10, 2004**

**Ft. Collins, CO**

The forum will focus on contributions from the central Rocky Mountains and Great Plains to conservation and multiple-use management of rangelands, fisheries, and wildlife resources in the region and nationally.

## **Southwestern Region Centennial Forum**

**November 8-9, 2004**

**Albuquerque, NM**

This Southwestern Region forum will look at global connections in forestry management and identify accomplishments and opportunities in natural resource management through international examples.

## **Northern Region and Rocky Mountain Research Station Forum**

**November 9-10, 2004**

**Missoula, MT**

This forum will be a collaborative learning experience to examine conservation in the past 100 years, the future of conservation and its leaders, and stewardship of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

## **Eastern Region Forum**

**November 9, 2004**

**Chicago, IL**

Forests and natural open space are vitally important to major metropolitan areas as well as local communities. This forum will examine Forest Service efforts to help cities deal with the pressures of increasing populations, invasive species, and declining quality of life in urban areas.

## **Alaska Region Forum**

**November 13, 2004**

**Anchorage, AK**

The Alaska forum will take a look at the relationship between healthy forests and healthy communities.

## **Northeastern Research Station**

**and Northeastern Area Forum**

**November 14-15, 2004**

**Philadelphia, PA**

Forum attendees will be engaged in dialogue and asked to share perspectives and ideas about the loss of open space and landscape change.

## **Intermountain Region Forum**

**November 18-19, 2004**

**Boise, ID**

This forum will look at the history of Forest Service fire management, current trends in fire and forest health, and future management of western forests.

## **Grey Towers Forum**

**November 18-19, 2004**

**Milford, PA**

Gifford Pinchot's historic home, Grey Towers, provides the setting for a discussion of Forest Service organizational history and philosophy, and specifically Pinchot's founding premise of "the greatest good, for the greatest number in the long run."

## **Pacific Northwest Region, Alaska Region & PNW Research**

**Station Forum**

**November 19-20, 2004**

**Stevenson, WA**

Forum participants will examine how the Forest Service can continue to provide quality outdoor recreation opportunities in the face of rapid social and technological changes in recreation use on national forests.



## *History of Smokey Bear Revisited During 60th Birthday Celebration*

In 1910, devastating forest fires in Idaho and Montana made our agency realize the effects of wildfires on forest lands and began to set fire policy. The Forest Service developed ways to forecast fire behavior. A vigorous campaign began to inform citizens about fire prevention, extinguish the flames, and provide Federal aid to State and private landowners to raise awareness for fire protection for the Nation's ecosystems.

Over the years, Americans received many Forest Service messages about the damages of unwanted human-caused forest fires, but no formal or national campaign existed. In 1939, a poster entitled "Your Forest—Your Fault" featured a forest ranger in the image of Uncle Sam pointing to a raging forest fire. From 1936 to 1941, a total of 210,000 forest fires burned more than 30 million acres of forest and range land. Humans caused 9 out of 10.

In 1942, the Forest Service organized the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program. On August 9, 1944, a fictional character bear was chosen to be the spokesperson for forest fire prevention. The bear was named "Smokey" after a well-known Assistant Fire Chief named Smokey Joe Martin.

The first slogan, "Care will prevent 9 out of 10 forest fires," was developed and artist Albert Staehle became Smokey's creator. Within a couple of years, another artist named Rudy Wendelin took over as the Smokey Bear artist and stayed until his retirement in 1973. The fire prevention campaign has become the longest single running campaign in U.S. history.

Smokey's message "Remember only you can prevent forest fires" was coined in 1947. Events on May 9, 1950, however, changed forever the way Americans would look at the forest fire prevention message. On that day, a 5-pound black bear cub was found burned and clinging to a charred tree after a forest fire in the Capitan Mountains near Capitan, NM. Ray Bell, a New Mexico Game Warden, and his family nursed the bear back to health. Named "Smokey" after the poster bear, the cub was later sent to the National Zoo in Washington, DC, to become the "living symbol" for fire prevention. The original Smokey Bear is buried at Smokey Bear Historical State Park in Capitan.

## *Smokey Bear Celebrates 60th Birthday*

The year 2004 commemorated Smokey Bear's 60th birthday and celebrations were held all year long at numerous events across the country. A national celebration was held on August 9, Smokey's official birthday, at Universal Studios in Los Angeles, CA. Another successful event was held in Capitan, NM, at the birthplace of Smokey Bear, from May 7–9. The event, attended by approximately 7,500 visitors, included displays, food booths, and live band performances. More information about Smokey's 60th can be found at <http://www.smokeybear.com>.

## *Cobra Helicopter Assists Firefighters*

**F**irefighters and the public have a new, innovative, high-tech friend: FIREWATCH. The bright red AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter is one of 25 helicopters that were transferred to the Forest Service from the U.S. Army after they were retired from active military service in 1996.

The helicopter is equipped with cameras that include specialized low-light cameras, including high-resolution color cameras capable of reading a license plate at more than half a mile. It has infrared capability to see through smoke, and it delivers real-time video to fire managers on the ground. This capability allows managers to monitor the current fire situation from the incident command post and make improved decisions on deploying firefighters and helping sheriff's departments order timely evacuations. Sophisticated lasers can hold the cameras on specific spots during flight for detailed examination.

Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, Regional Forester Jack Blackwell, Pacific Southwest Research Director Jim Sedell, Director of Fire and Aviation Ray Quintanar, other fire specialists, and the media were invited to see a demonstration of FIREWATCH's high-tech capabilities at the San Bernardino Airtanker Base on August 8, 2004.

"The technology is amazing," Chief Bosworth said. "I wish we'd had this when I was fighting fires. The big deal is the real-time information. Most of the time, you get somebody describing to you what's out there. But the only way you can see what's going on, especially with the smoke, is with something like this."

As the demonstration progressed, he said he could envision other potential uses for the helicopter including search-and-rescue operations, other disasters, and homeland security.

The FIREWATCH helicopter was successfully used in 2004 on the Pine, Crown, and Foothill fires in Southern California and the Sims fire on the Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests.



***AH-1 Cobra helicopter***



***Left to right: Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth; Ron Raley, R-5 Fire & Aviation; R-5 Regional Forester Jack Blackwell; R-5 Fire & Aviation Director Ray Quintanar***



## M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F

*New Ways of Doing Business*

It's long been clear to a lot of us that we need new ways of doing business. We have an obligation to the American people to get every dollar we can to the ground, where it counts. In many cases, we aren't doing that well enough because of business practices that are inefficient and outdated.

That calls for change, and change always brings anxiety. As you know, we're changing the way we deliver services associated with information technology (IT), human resources (HR) management, and budget and financial management (FM). I want everyone to know that I've heard your concerns and I'm paying close attention to them.

You probably know our IT competitive sourcing study culminated in a win for the Forest Service's most efficient organization (MEO). We're now formulating a strategy for implementing the MEO, and we expect to share it with you by early October. Let me assure you that we're trying to maximize the number of positive options for affected employees. We're absolutely committed to fairness and consistency as we move forward.

In addition, we plan to make HR more modern and efficient. We're still discussing the implementation plan; before we move forward, I want to make sure that it is reasonable and doable. I also want to make sure that our current HR organization is able to support all of our reorganization efforts. I expect the details of what we are going to do and how we will do it to be finalized in the near future so we can share it with all employees. Again, we are stressing maximum options for employees as well as fairness and consistency.

Finally, we are centralizing our budget and financial management functions and reengineering many of the associated processes. The new centralized organization will be located in Albuquerque, NM. We expect to sign a building lease in the near future to begin laying out workspaces and installing equipment so that we can take occupancy in January 2005.

As always, information will be shared with you as soon as decisions are made. Our IT, HR, and FM Web sites have important information, and I encourage you to look there. Your representatives on the Administrative Management Council also have the latest information. If you have any other questions, feel free to send an e-mail to Ron Hooper, Project Manager, at rhooper@fs.fed.us.

*Dale N. Bosworth*  
Chief

## *California Fire Fatality*

A California Department of Forestry (CDF) firefighter was killed September 12, 2004, on the Tuolumne Fire, near the western route into Yosemite National Park. She was a member of a seven-person helitack crew assigned to the Columbia Air Attack Base in Columbia, CA. The fatality occurred as the result of a burnover while the crew was conducting initial attack operations on a fire in the Tuolumne River Canyon on the Stanislaus National Forest in California. Six other crewmembers were also injured. One crewmember was flown to Doctors Medical Center in Modesto, CA; the other five were treated and released. A joint CDF and Forest Service investigation team was convened on Monday, September 13, 2004. The team was lead by John Berry, Forest Supervisor on the Eldorado National Forest in California.

## *Forest Service Assistance to Hurricane Relief Efforts*

A Presidential Disaster Declaration was issued on September 4, 2004, for Hurricane Frances in Florida and another was issued on September 16 for Hurricane Ivan in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requested Forest Service assistance, including two Area Command Teams that worked at the Regional Operations Center and the Disaster Field Office. Eleven Type 1 Incident Management Teams (IMTs), four Buying Teams (purchasing and contracting services), and numerous other personnel performed a variety of tasks during these hurricane responses. The IMTs were deployed to assist FEMA with disaster relief and the operation of receiving and distribution centers, base camps, and logistics staging areas for essential supplies, including aircraft, mobile caterers, and showers. One team took on a special assignment of helping elderly and special needs patients to evacuate.



***Firefighters and Forest Service employees were busy distributing supplies following Hurricane Ivan.***

**O C T O B E R 1 , 2 0 0 4**

## *“Following the Smoke” Wins Historic Preservation Award*

“Following the Smoke,” a Forest Service project conducted in conjunction with the Karuk Indigenous Basketweavers and other partners, received the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s (ACHP) Chairman’s Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation on August 4, 2004.

“Following the Smoke” is a 7-year-old project to sustain and share with the public the full process of basketweaving, from gathering and creating the materials to the finished products. The project’s name comes from the local Karuk, Yurok, and Hupa basketweavers’ practice of combing areas after Forest Service-controlled burns to find beargrass shoots and other suitable natural materials for weaving.



Because the traditional vegetation necessary to create handcrafted basketry grows best in forest areas that have experienced a fire, volunteers participate in preparing forest areas for controlled burns conducted by the Forest Service, thinning heavy fire fuel areas, and constructing fire breaks.

"Fire doesn't just enhance the basketry materials," basketweaver Millie Black Graber said. "It's healthy for the forest."

Chairman Nau noted, "The staff of the Six Rivers National Forest, the Karuk Indigenous Basketweavers, and their associates have combined efforts to create a powerful positive example of how partnerships in preservation can benefit individuals, local areas, and the Nation."

The project's benefits are cultural, educational, environmental, and economic. Volunteer participants camp for a week with Native American basketweavers, helping collect, process, and weave the natural materials that have been used for millennia to create fine basketry.

The volunteers also participate in storytelling and other traditional activities, thereby learning about the relationship between healthy forests, cultural activities, and heritage preservation.

Under the project, more than 500 participants have volunteered an estimated 2,800 hours of work preparing landscapes for controlled burns, saving approximately \$25,000 in taxpayer dollars.

"Following the Smoke" is one project in the larger U.S. Forest Service Passport in Time (PIT) program. PIT is a national program that gives volunteers the opportunity to participate in a wide-ranging selection of historic preservation and cultural resource projects.

## *Support Continues for Hurricane Relief Efforts*

The size, scope, and complexity of the Federal hurricane response missions in 2004 were unprecedented after four major hurricanes slammed into Florida and nearby States. Working cooperatively with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and in partnership with the States and counties, wildland fire interagency Incident Management Teams (IMTs) were assigned to manage a variety of disaster relief efforts that proved to be invaluable to the hurricane victims.

As of September 2004, the cost for the interagency wildland fire community response to the hurricanes was estimated at \$18 million. This effort represents the largest number of resources ever dispatched through the Incident Command System to a natural disaster. Thirteen of the Nation's 17 Type 1 IMTs were committed to the hurricane recovery effort. As of September 27, 2004, 1,060 overhead personnel and 21 crews were committed to the hurricane response efforts in Florida and Alabama.



***Southern Region Red Team briefing at the Hurricane Charley Mobilization Center in Lakeland, FL.***

## *Two Forest Service Employees Survive, Three Others Perish in Plane Crash in Northern Rockies*

No one was believed to have survived the fiery crash of a charter flight carrying four Forest Service employees to the Shafer Guard Station in the Bob Marshall Wilderness on the Flathead National Forest in Montana on September 20, 2004. Miraculously, Matthew Ramige, 29, and Jodee Hogg, 23, of the Rocky Mountain Research Station, survived the crash and walked out of the wilderness 2 days later. Sadly, Rocky Mountain Research Station employee Davita M. Bryant, 32, of Whitefish, MT; Flathead National Forest employee Ken Good, 58, of Kalispell, MT; and pilot Jim Long of Kalispell did not survive.

Long and Bryant were killed in the crash. Good, Hogg, and Ramige escaped the aircraft with burns and other injuries and survived the night. Good died from his injuries the following morning, and Hogg and Ramige hiked out of the crash site before rescuers arrived. The two survivors found their way to help along U.S. Highway 2 the next day, after rescuers had declared that no one had survived the crash.

*Governor Judy Martz and Lieutenant Governor Karl Ohs awarded Montana Medals of Valor to the two survivors of the plane crash and the pilot, who authorities say helped free Ken Good before he died. The heartfelt ceremony, with many friends, family, and Forest Service employees in attendance, took place on November 10, 2004, in the Capitol Rotunda in Helena, MT. Governor Martz recognized Hogg, Ramige, and Long for their bravery and also remembered the three who perished in the crash.*

## *Seismic Activity Increases on Mount St. Helens*

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest was in close contact with U. S. Geological Survey/Cascades Volcano Observatory in Vancouver, WA, and the University of Washington Pacific Northwest Seismograph Network during the significant and increasing seismic activity on Mount St. Helens in September of 2004. Some recreational activities were closed in certain areas for safety reasons. Starting on September 23, 2004, the unrest on Mount St. Helens was heralded by a swarm of small earthquakes. On September 29, deformation of the crater floor was recognized. On October 1, the first emissions of steam and ash occurred.

Visit the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Web site at [http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/current\\_conditions/special.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/current_conditions/special.shtml) for an update.

To view a live shot of Mount St. Helens, visit the Web site for the one and only live VolcanoCam at <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/volcanocams/msh/>. You will be able to see a static image of Mount St. Helens from the Johnston Ridge Observatory. The observatory and VolcanoCam are located at an elevation of approximately 4,500 feet, about 5 miles from the volcano.



***Lava dome inside crater of Mount St. Helens.***



## M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F

*Forest Service Ready for HR Change*

**A**s you know, we have decided to move forward with business process reengineering (BPR) for Human Resources (HR). It's a big challenge, especially coming on top of our initiatives for Information Technology (IT) and Financial Management (FM). That's why we looked to make sure we had adequate capacity for implementing all three efforts before going forward.

We are working hard to assure that the three efforts are coordinated, and that we can address the concerns of small rural communities that will be affected by these changes in the way we do business. I am confident that we can support all three initiatives and that the necessary oversight is in place.

The HR BPR decision was announced on September 29, and we will soon release details of the final report and implementation plan. We will also name members of the task groups involved in the transition.

We will not move any HR personnel until 2006, and then only if we have successfully completed the IT and FM transitions and the necessary HR automation. I deeply value the service of our HR specialists, and to be successful we need their continued support of all three efforts.

Remember that the efficiencies we gain from each of these initiatives are critical to our success as an agency. They will let us get more dollars to the ground, where it counts. Ultimately, the land we care for will benefit, and so will the people we serve.

Dale N. Bosworth  
Chief

*Award Ceremony Recognizes American Indians for Help in Creating Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations*

**A**n award ceremony honoring six American Indians who were instrumental in the development of the Forest Service's new national Office of Tribal Relations was held September 22, 2004, at the Forest Service National Headquarters Office.

The award recipients included Butch Blazer, Nolan Colegrove, Keller George, Carol Jorgensen, Susan Masten, and Robert "Bob" Tippiconnie. Each guest received a blanket decorated with various Indian designs.

"These American Indian leaders were instrumental in building our tribal relations program to better serve Indian tribes and communities," said Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth. "My vision is to work with Indian tribes to meet tribal forestry needs and to make the benefits of all Forest Service programs available to the Indian tribes."

Over the past several years, the Forest Service has worked to articulate consistent policies in its government-to-government relationship with American Indians, including policies on consultation, traditional uses of forest products, and confidentiality for traditional knowledge and reburial.

Bosworth also received an award from Mark Rey, U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, recognizing the chief's long history of leadership in building strong government-to-government relationships between the Forest Service and Indian tribes.

The award ceremony was held during an open house to celebrate and highlight the partnerships among American Indian tribes, Native Alaskans, Native Hawaiians, and the Forest Service. Guests included members of federally recognized Indian tribes, presidents of Indian Tribal Colleges, State foresters, representatives from State Indian commissions and other Indian organizations, White House and congressional representatives, and other Federal agency employees.

The multievent forum also included the opening of the agency's new Hall of Tribes, a permanent gallery of interpretive displays and artifacts that commemorate the many tribal and Forest Service partnerships. Two presentations on partnership programs were also held, highlighting archaeological research and cooperative fisheries assessments in Alaska.

"The award ceremony, the Hall of Tribes, and the establishment of the new Office of Tribal Relations are very significant," said Dale Kanen, the agency's first director of the Office of Tribal Relations. "We look forward to building on the legacy created by those who helped us develop this new office by strengthening our partnerships with American Indians, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians."

The open house and award ceremony were part of the remarkable weeklong First Americans Festival of ceremonies and native music, dance, and storytelling events held in conjunction with the September 21 opening of the Smithsonian's new National Museum of the American Indian.

## *Forest Service to Centralize Human Resources Functions in Albuquerque, NM*

The Forest Service announced on October 6, 2004, that it would centralize its human resources (HR) functions at a single location in Albuquerque, NM—for an anticipated savings of \$20 million a year.

"This decision demonstrates the agency's commitment to becoming leaner, more efficient, and more cost effective," said Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth. "A single center, unifying all HR operations, will provide the most consistent and cost-effective service for our employees and managers. In addition, we will be more responsive to taxpayers."

The choice to centralize units resulted from a yearlong, agencywide review of HR performance prompted by the 2000 President's Management Agenda, which encourages Federal departments to become more efficient and costeffective.



**Back, left to right: Chief Bosworth and Butch Blazer. Front, left to right: Bob Tippiconnie, Carol Jorgensen, Susan Masten, Gary Morishma, and Keller George.**



The study found that the main reason the cost of administering human resources in the Forest Service is much higher than HR costs of other organizations in the public and private sectors is because the agency is so decentralized.

Positions in Albuquerque will total nearly 300. The Forest Service expects the HR move to begin in 2006.

The following changes are anticipated by the decision:

- Faster and higher quality service for HR customers.
- Agencywide consistency of standard processes and procedures.
- Lower cost for the delivery of HR services.
- Alignment with HR industry performance measures.

Results of the review followed a June 1, 2004, decision to consolidate the Forest Service's budget and finance operations at a single location, which was also expected to result in a significant savings for the agency. The Forest Service announced on October 5, 2004, that the San Francisco and Pan American Building, located within the Journal Center in Albuquerque, is the site for the agency's national financial services center. It was decided that the HR operations would be housed at the same location, named the Albuquerque Service Center.

O C T O B E R 2 9 , 2 0 0 4

### *Buyout and/or Early Out Offered to Financial Management Personnel*

To lessen the potential impacts on employees associated with implementing the new financial management (FM) organization, employees were offered the opportunity to apply for buyouts and/or early outs. This opportunity was offered to grade 13 and below employees who were performing or supporting transferring FM work functions at least 50 percent or more of the time or for whom transferring work is grade controlling. Employees in the GS-510 and GS-511 series, however, were excluded from the buyout and early out opportunity because it was expected that all such employees would be offered positions in the new organization.

Buyouts (also known as Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment or VSIP) provide a financial incentive for eligible employees to voluntarily separate by optional retirement, voluntary early retirement, or resignation. The amount received for a buyout is equal to an employee's severance pay/buyout calculation amount or \$25,000, whichever is less.

## *USDA To Provide Nearly \$500 Million in Disaster Aid*

**O**n October 25, 2004, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the availability of nearly \$500 million in disaster assistance to restore farmland and forests. The funds were part of the \$13 billion hurricane relief package signed by President George W. Bush on October 13, 2004. The 2004 hurricane season was one of the most destructive on record. Four major hurricanes struck the Caribbean and the Southeast United States damaging not only homes and communities, but also many forests and endangered species. This funding included \$113 million for forest rehabilitation in eight Southeastern States and Puerto Rico.

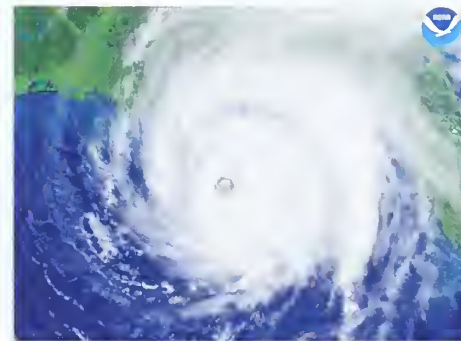
Forests in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Puerto Rico all sustained damage from either Hurricane Charley, Frances, Ivan, or Jeanne. The disaster assistance funding was to be used by the Forest Service and States for on-the-ground work to restore thousands of acres of trees, hundreds of miles of trails and roads, dozens of recreation and administrative sites, bridges and other infrastructure, as well as endangered species habitat. The funds were also to be used to reduce the risk of potential insect, disease, and invasive weed infestations. In addition, because the Southeast faces an increased risk of wildland fire due to downed trees and other hazardous fuels, the money would be used for wildland fire management.

The following is a summary of the damage from the hurricanes to National Forest System lands in the Southeastern States and Puerto Rico:

- In North Carolina, 600 miles of Forest Service roads, 150 miles of trails, and 15 recreation sites were damaged by mudslides and soil erosion.
- In Florida, 250 acres of the Apalachicola National Forest were damaged by tornados. The Osceola and Ocala National Forests had 50 percent of their road system submerged by floodwaters or cut off by fallen trees.
- In Alabama, ongoing timber sales were damaged, roads were cut off in all five ranger districts of the Conecuh National Forest, and excess fuel loading and the loss of fire lines has increased the forest's fire risk.
- In Georgia, 840 miles of trails and the Wise Creek bank stabilization structure located on the Ocmulgee River were severely damaged.
- Mississippi and Virginia sustained extensive damage to roads in national forests.
- In Tennessee and South Carolina, downed trees, erosion, and mudslides have damaged infrastructure, wildlife habitat, and watersheds in national forests.
- In Puerto Rico, significant parrot habitat at the Forest Service's International Institute of Tropical Forestry was damaged.

Veneman praised the unprecedented support given by the Forest Service to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and States in the Federal hurricane response effort in addition to these disaster funds.

"The Forest Service is expert in helping manage disasters. It committed more than 1,200 personnel from its wildland fire community to manage highly com-



*Satellite image of Hurricane Ivan.*



plex receiving and distribution centers, base camps, and logistics staging areas in hurricane-stricken States,” said Veneman. “This effort represents the broadest application of the Incident Command System to a nonfire natural disaster.”

The Forest Service uses the incident management structure to manage a human-caused or natural occurrence that requires emergency service action to prevent or reduce the loss of life or damage to property or natural resources. Costs as of October 2004 for the wildland fire community hurricane response effort were estimated at \$25 million.

## *Forest Service Unveils Innovative Wheelchair-Friendly Playground*

**M**ore children with physical disabilities will now be able to enjoy a wheelchair-friendly playground, thanks to researchers at the Forest Service’s Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, WI.

In celebration of National Forest Products Week, the H. Winship Wheatley Early Childhood Center in Capitol Heights, MD, outside of Washington, DC, became the first demonstration site for the new playground, which uses readily available and inexpensive surface material made from wood chips.

“Traditional wood chips and other loose materials, such as sand or pea gravel used in today’s playgrounds are generally effective at reducing injuries from falls, but such surfaces pose a serious obstacle for anyone using a wheelchair or walker,” said Ann Bartuska, Deputy Chief for Research and Development at the Forest Service. “Our researchers have been working to develop a cost-effective material that combines the necessary shock absorbance with enough firmness to enable a wheelchair or other device to maneuver easily and safely.”

Currently, many playgrounds use a 10- to 12-inch layer of wood chips, called “engineered wood fiber,” to prevent injuries around swings, climbing gyms, and other playground equipment. “Engineered wood fiber” is the technical name for a loose, mulch-like mixture of hardwood chips that meets certain specifications regarding size and shape of the chips, consistency, drainage, impact attenuation, and other qualities. Because the material is loose, however, the wheels or feet of a mobility device quickly sink in, causing the wheelchair or other device to get stuck or even tip over.

“Many of our children use wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches and are eager to try out the new playground equipment,” said Wheatley Center Principal Linda Wiskochil.

The prototype surfacing material consists of a 1.5- to 2.5-inch thick layer of engineered wood fiber mixed with a polyurethane binder or stabilizer. The stabilized fiber is on top of 8 to 10 inches of loose (unstabilized) engineered wood fiber, which is on top of a drainage layer.

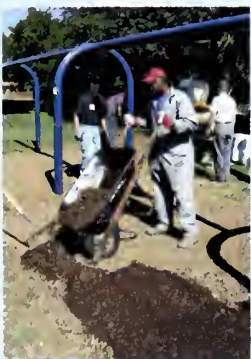
More information on the new playground can be found at <http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us>.



*Students at the H. Winship Wheatley Early Childhood Center prepare for their first experience on the new wheelchair-friendly playground.*



*Closeup of stabilized wood fiber used to create the wheelchair-friendly playground.*



*A worker pours the new stabilized fiber on top of the engineered wood fiber.*

M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F

*A New Century of Service Through Partnerships*

Next year, the Forest Service will be 100 years old. We're holding forums around the country to prepare for a Centennial Congress in January. The Congress will celebrate 100 years of Forest Service accomplishments and help us prepare for the challenges ahead.

As we get ready for the Centennial, I'd like to remind you that these events are not just about us. A hundred years ago, Gifford Pinchot recognized the need for partnerships if we were to succeed. He planted the seeds of partnership in our first Use Book by directing our employees to work closely with local communities to promote conservation.

The Forest Service has always been about more than any of our parts—more than the National Forest System, more than the research and development we do, more than our State and Private Forestry programs, and more than our international programs. We have even been about more than our own employees. We have always been about partnerships—about getting together with our collaborators and figuring out how we can work together to reach our common goals.

As we prepare for the Centennial, please remember to keep the focus on the people we serve. Only by improving our partnerships through community-based forestry can we meet the Four Threats and all the other challenges we will face in the years ahead.

Dale N. Bosworth  
Chief

*Forest Service Announces National Strategy To Combat Invasive Species*

On October 28, 2004, the Forest Service unveiled a national strategy to prevent and control the threat of invasive species and nonnative plants in the United States. This action is part of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative to restore forest and rangeland health and protect communities from wildland fire and supports the President's Executive Order promoting cooperative conservation.

"Millions of acres of public and private lands are at risk from nonnative species. Each year, the United States loses 1.7 million acres to the spread of these invasives, in addition to spending billions of dollars on control measures," said Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey at the site of the Forest Service's new threat assessment center, slated to open early in 2005. The center will develop user-friendly technology and cutting-edge research on invasive species. "This national strategy will help to prevent, find, and contain the spread while working to rehabilitate and restore ecosystems."



The National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management focuses on four key elements: preventing invasive species before they arrive; finding new infestations before they spread and become established; containing and reducing existing infestations; and rehabilitating and restoring native habitats and ecosystems.

The plan will use one of the new tools developed under the —HFI—an early warning system to help land managers detect new invasives. Title VI of the 2004 Healthy Forests Restoration Act called for the Forest Service to develop such a system to improve its detection and response abilities to ecological disturbances across the Nation. The Forest Service is establishing two environmental threat assessment centers to cover both the Eastern and Western United States; the western center is located in Prineville.

An estimated 70 million acres of public and private lands are at serious risk from 26 different insects and diseases nationwide, most of which are nonnative. The Forest Service's Forest Health Protection and Research and Development programs work to minimize the spread of established invasive species and lessen the damages caused by native and nonnative insects, pathogens, and plants. By working with other Federal, State, and private organizations, the agency protects and improves America's forests using cutting-edge technology to rapidly respond to forest health threats.

For more information, visit [http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/programs/invasive\\_species\\_mgmt.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/programs/invasive_species_mgmt.shtml)

### *Forest Service Researcher Honored for Work on Wood Decay*

**D**r. Kenneth Hammel, a research chemist at the Forest Service's Forest Products Laboratory (FPL), was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) by the association's policymaking council. Hammel is also a U.S. Department of Agriculture associate professor in the Department of Bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Hammel was cited for his "outstanding contributions to understanding biodegradative processes produced by microbes and for the discovery of new mechanisms involved in fungal wood decay." Hammel was one of only 308 scientists and engineers worldwide named as AAAS Fellows in 2004.

At FPL, Hammel's research has focused on learning how certain fungi cause wood to decay. "Such decay causing fungi play a vital role in forest ecosystems. The same fungi, however, can also cause extensive damage to houses and other structures made of wood. Better understanding of how the fungi interact with wood could lead to the development of improved wood preservatives," Hammel said.

Hammel earned his bachelor's degree in genetics and his Ph.D. in comparative biochemistry from University of California, Berkeley. In 1983, he was awarded a North Atlantic Treaty Organization postdoctoral fellowship to do research in the



**Dr. Kenneth Hammel**

microbiology department at Philipp's University in Marburg, Germany. From 1984 to 1986, he held a joint appointment as postdoctoral research associate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and FPL.

After teaching for 5 years at the State University of New York in Syracuse, he returned to University of Wisconsin-Madison and FPL as a research chemist and team leader in FPL's Institute for Microbial and Biochemical Technology.

## Dave Maez Earns National Super Supervisor Award

*By Ignacio Peralta, Collaborative Forest Restoration Program Coordinator and Public Affairs, Carson National Forest.*

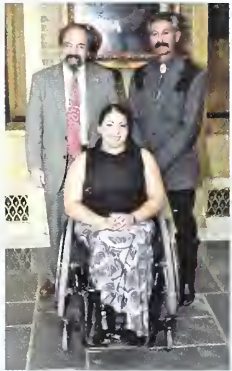
Dave Maez, Taos Interagency Dispatch Zone Manager and employee of the Carson National Forest, has been awarded the 2004 Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture Super Supervisor Award. Maez was selected from 17 national nominees from all U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies.

In June of 2002, Maez, a Forest Service employee with 24 years of service, transferred to the Carson National Forest where Maria Valerio was working as a dispatcher for the Taos Interagency Dispatch Zone. Maria, who nominated Dave for the award, had sustained a spinal cord injury while snow tubing with her family in 1997 and has been in a wheelchair ever since. "I was so impressed with Maria during her interview, I knew there was no holding back this young lady, and I've never seen her as being handicapped. This is a big honor for me, the Forest Supervisor of the Carson National Forest Martin Chavez, and Carson National Forest Fire Staff Officer Marc Trujillo. All the employees of the Forest have supported Maria and I every step of the way," said Dave.

Maria explained, "The moment I arrived on the Carson, Dave began the process of making sure that I would be an effective zone employee. He gained approval to make necessary changes for me to have full physical access to all facilities. The rest-room was made accessible, the radio console was adjusted, and the entire dispatch office was rearranged to eliminate access barriers. Dave then requested and received a handicapped accessible car so I could travel on forest business."

"Beyond the physical barriers, Dave has mentored me with all of his accumulated knowledge of zone management. Under Dave's mentorship, guidance, and direction, I have gained the knowledge to become an instructor of the Resource Ordering and Status System and the Incident Qualification and Certification System. Dave looks beyond my disability and encourages me to take on new challenges."

"In 2003, when the zone was searching for aerial observers for the fire season, I approached Dave and asked if I could take the training. Dave gave the go-ahead to Paul Mondragon, Assistant Aviation Officer for the forest, to make all the necessary arrangements with the regional office for an aircraft for my flight training assignments. Two to three more assignments and I'll have my aerial observer qualifications. Through Dave's encouragement and support, I have had fire



**USDA Under Secretary Mark Rey (left), Dave Maez (right), and Maria Valerio (center) at the USDA Whitten building in Washington, DC.**



assignments on the Ponil Complex as an initial attack dispatcher, the Encebado Fire in expanded dispatch, the Nuttall Fire as a personnel time recorder, and the Madera prescribed fire,” stated Maria.

Dave and Maria traveled to Washington, DC, where they attended an awards ceremony on October 27, 2004. Dave was presented the Super Supervisor award from USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey.

**N O V E M B E R 2 6 , 2 0 0 4**

## *Alaska Region Employee Dies in Boating Accident*

**T**he Alaska Region mourned the loss of Tongass National Forest Fisheries Biologist Ricardo Sainz. Sainz, 42, died in an accident on November 4, 2004, at Bakewell Creek in Misty Fiords National Monument, approximately 40 miles east of Ketchikan, while attempting to retrieve fisheries observation equipment.

Sainz and two Forest Service fisheries technicians were crossing Bakewell Lake in a boat after retrieving fisheries equipment. The boat became caught in the current and appeared to be headed toward the lake’s outfall and a nearby 35-foot waterfall. Sainz and one of the fisheries technicians abandoned the boat and tried to swim to shore. The third person stayed with the boat. The other two employees made it to shore, but Sainz disappeared in the murky current.

An extensive search operation was conducted by Alaska State Troopers, the Ketchikan Volunteer Rescue Service, Coast Guard and Forest Service personnel, and local divers. After 6 days of exhaustive searching by multiple agencies, using all available resources, it was apparent Sainz did not survive.

“It saddens me to have to announce that we have lost a member of the Tongass National Forest,” said Tongass National Forest Supervisor Forrest Cole. “Our condolences go out to Ricardo’s wife and his other family members. They are in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.”

Sainz was born and raised in Nogales, AZ. He graduated from Nogales High School in 1980 and joined the Army, in which he served for 4 years including an assignment in Germany. After an honorable discharge from the Army, Sainz enrolled in Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and joined the college’s Army Reserve Officer Training Corps. He graduated in 1990 with a bachelor’s degree in fisheries biology and was commissioned as an officer in the Army Reserve. After graduation, Sainz moved to Alaska, joined the Army National Guard, and got a job as a fisheries biologist with the Tongass National Forest in 1991.

“Ricardo was doing the work he loved to do as a fisheries biologist,” said Todd Tisler, Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District’s Fish and Wildlife staff officer and Sainz’s supervisor. “Ricardo once mentioned to me that he knew as a child that he wanted to be a fish biologist. That was his dream and he achieved it. He leaves a legacy as a fisheries biologist on the Tongass National Forest. Ricardo will be fondly remembered by everyone who was fortunate enough to have known and worked with him.”



**Ricardo Sainz**

## *Smokey Bear's Message Gets Delivered in Iraq*

**T**hanks to the efforts of Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer John Price from the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, Smokey Bear's message is being delivered across the globe. John is on military assignment in Iraq and has been handing out Smokey Bear materials to children he encounters while on duty. He said he has been surprised how many people in Iraq already know who Smokey is. Our thoughts and prayers go out to John and other Forest Service employees who are serving in the military overseas.

The following is a copy of an e-mail John sent to his friends and coworkers on October 27, 2004, about his experiences in Iraq. (This e-mail has been edited for style and length.)

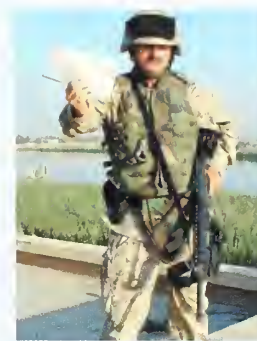
*Hey everybody,*

*I am doing very well here. Kind of dangerous now and then but I am not complaining. I want to thank everyone that is sending all the well wishes and packages and has contacted my wife offering his or her support to me to my family. It's a real morale booster knowing that I have such a large "family" base supporting me.*

*I am really proud to work for the Forest Service. I believe in our mission and serving the American citizen. Smokey is our best ambassador and is arguably the most widely known and successful of any Government propaganda effort. I asked the local Iraqi interpreter if she had heard of Smokey Bear and she said she had! In the middle of Iraq, Smokey's message is known! She said it would be appropriate and welcome to give Smokey favors to the local kids. The next day, our patrol went out and encountered some little Iraqis and our troops did the positive public contact thing.*

*It may sound small or silly but it's a powerful tool. When you are where the rubber meets the road of the action going on around you, whether you are working campgrounds or the streets on patrol, it's cool to see this making a difference.*

*1st Sgt. John R. Price  
U.S. Marine Corps*



**John Price stands atop a building in Iraq in October 2004 proudly displaying his completed U.S. Presidential election ballot.**



**One of John's fellow Marines hands out Smokey materials to a young Iraqi girl.**



## *Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman Announces Resignation*



*27th Secretary of Agriculture  
Ann M. Veneman*

**A**nn Veneman submitted her resignation as Secretary of Agriculture. She announced her resignation in a letter to President George W. Bush on November 12, 2004. In her letter, she felt she had made great progress in the last 4 years and wanted to move on to new opportunities. Veneman began her position as the 27th Secretary of Agriculture on January 20, 2001.

D E C E M B E R 1 0 , 2 0 0 4

### *M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F* *Have a Safe and Happy Holiday*

**T**he holiday season is on us again. It's a time to spend with family and friends and to be grateful for the things that really count in our lives. For us, that includes the privilege of serving with you in the Forest Service.

In fall of 2004, the Forest Service started preparing for its centennial celebration in 2005 with a series of regional forums around the country to reflect on the history and accomplishments of conservation and the challenges we will face in the years ahead. In January 2005, we will hold a Centennial Congress in Washington, DC, where we will meet with our partners and collaborators to commemorate the first American Forest Congress and to celebrate 100 years of caring for the land and serving people.

In this holiday season, as Sally and I reflect on the things that really matter, we both feel truly fortunate. After serving for decades in the Forest Service, we know the agency well, and we cannot imagine a finer group of people to serve with than you. We are proud to be among you.

Please remember to stay safe in everything you do during the holidays so that you can return next year refreshed and ready to celebrate our Forest Service centennial. We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

*Dale N. Bosworth, Chief  
Sally Collins, Associate Chief*

## *President Nominates Governor Mike Johanns as Secretary of Agriculture*

Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns was named to serve as the 28th Secretary of Agriculture. Secretary Johanns' strong agricultural roots stretch back to his childhood. He was born in Iowa and grew up doing chores on his family's dairy farm. As the son of a dairy farmer, he developed a deep respect for the land and the people who work it. He still describes himself as "a farmer's son with an intense passion for agriculture." More information about Johanns can be found at <http://www.usda.gov>.



*28th Secretary of Agriculture  
Mike Johanns.*

## *Forest Service's Reorganization of Business and Finance Operations Receives Departmental Approval*

On December 17, 2004, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Departmental Administration approved the reorganization of Forest Service Budget and Finance operations, including the establishment of the Albuquerque Service Center (ASC). When fully operational, the ASC will consist of approximately 400 people performing the bulk of all financial management activities for the Forest Service. Agency personnel from Human Resources Management and Information Resources Management will also be located at the ASC.

**D E C E M B E R 2 4 , 2 0 0 4**

## *2004 Capitol Holiday Tree*

The 2004 Capitol Holiday Tree was a 70-foot red spruce from the Warm Springs Ranger District of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests in Virginia. The tree was cut the week of November 1 and given a sendoff on November 13 at the Highland County Fair Grounds. In the 24-year history of the Capitol Holiday Tree, this is the first time it has come from Virginia.

The 2004 theme was Birthplace of Presidents, because eight U.S. presidents were born in eight different Virginia counties. The tree stopped in each of the counties and arrived on the Capitol grounds on November 29.

A little rain didn't stop people from enjoying the tree lighting ceremony at the U.S. Capitol on December 9. Blayne Braden, a 7-year-old student from Highland County who won a trip to the lighting, joined Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert as they flipped the switch and turned on the 10,000 lights covering the holiday tree.



*Image of the 2004 Capitol Holiday tree in  
the reflecting pool at the U.S. Capitol.*



## *Forest Service Publishes Planning Rule for Better Management of National Forests and Grasslands*

**O**n December 22, 2004, the Forest Service released its final rule that provides the framework for individual forest management plans governing the 155 national forests and 20 grasslands. For the first time, an Environmental Management System (EMS) will be used during the planning process to improve performance and accountability. The rule establishes a dynamic process to account for changing forest conditions, emphasizes science and public involvement, and ultimately will help local forest managers provide future generations with healthier forests, cleaner air and water, and more abundant wildlife while sustaining a variety of forest uses.

“The new rule will improve the way we work with the public by making forest planning more open, understandable, and timely,” said Forest Service Associate Chief Sally Collins. “It will enable Forest Service experts to respond more rapidly to changing conditions, such as wildfires, and emerging threats, such as invasive species.”

The agency will adopt an EMS for each forest and grassland. EMS connects planning with implementation so that plans can be dynamic, and outcomes of project-level decisions can be assessed for continuous improvement. A key feature of the EMS is the requirement for independent audits of the Forest Service’s work. This new review and oversight of agency performance will help the Forest Service more fully account for its management of more than 192 million acres of public land.

The forest planning process generally takes 5 to 7 years to revise a 15-year management plan. Under the new rule, forest plan revisions will take approximately 2 to 3 years, with a comprehensive evaluation of the plan to be completed every 5 years to ensure it is meeting goals and objectives. Desired land conditions will be outlined in each management plan, and local managers will be held accountable for their efforts to achieve them.

The new rule directs forest managers to take into account the best available science to protect air, water, wildlife, and other important natural resources at a landscape level. Plant and wildlife protections will be provided first by conserving ecosystems as a whole, with more targeted protections for listed species and other species of concern. Management decisions will consider ecological, social, and economic sustainability, consistent with broadly accepted international standards.

Land management plans under the new rule will be strategic in nature. Generally, these plans will not include specific project management decisions. If a plan does include decisions with on-the-ground effects, it will require an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement as appropriate, consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This provision is in a separate proposal identifying how planned development, amendment, and revision will comply with NEPA requirements.

The new rule neither promotes nor discourages any particular forest use, such as recreation, grazing, timber harvest, or mineral development. Decisions regarding such uses will be made on a forest-by-forest basis and will be informed by

local conditions, science, and public input. Guidelines on activities, such as timber harvesting, will be placed in the directives.

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires the Forest Service to develop, periodically revise, and amend all forest and grassland plans. The first generation of forest plans was developed under a regulation adopted in 1982. Currently, 49 revisions are under way using the 22-year-old regulation. Those forests and grasslands may now choose to change to the new rule or wait to use the new rule for their next revision or amendment. An additional 42 are awaiting revision and must use the new rule.

## *Mount St. Helens VolcanoCam Stats*

**T**he Gifford Pinchot National Forest's Mount St. Helens VolcanoCam received more than 36 million hits in a 12-day period in fall of 2004 when seismic activity was at its peak. Pacific Northwest regional Web managers were busy reading thousands of e-mails from people all over the world, from cubicle dwellers to teachers using the VolcanoCam in classrooms. The Forest Service provided the only live webcam of Mount St. Helens during the seismic activity.

When Mount St. Helens threatened to erupt in early October 2004 and the immediate area had to be evacuated, a low-cost webcam attached to a surplus Pentium III server kept watch over the rumbling peak outside Amboy, WA.

Every 5 minutes, the Forest Service's Mount St. Helens VolcanoCam posted a new picture from the camera. Some shots showed a peaceful mountain, while steam billowed across others.

The VolcanoCam was "the closest camera of any type to Mount St. Helens" during the evacuation, said Dennis Lapcewich, Forest Service Webmaster for the Pacific Northwest Region.

Not surprisingly, the Forest Service's Web servers were inundated with viewer requests. Prior to the hubbub, the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument site averaged about 50,000 hits a month. During the first eruptions in October, hits on the cam page jumped to more than 75,000 a day, Lapcewich said. "I'm getting e-mails from teachers and students all over the world who think it's wonderful," he said.

The VolcanoCam site has no direct funding from the Forest Service, though the agency supports the infrastructure. The camera was bought with funds raised by the Northwest Interpretive Association, a nonprofit business coalition.

The Webcam sits in a weatherproof box outside the Johnston Ridge Observatory, about 5 miles from the 8,300-foot mountain. It sends live video to the server inside the observatory. Every 5 minutes, the server slices a still image from the video stream and relays it to the Forest Service's Web servers.



***Eruption of Mount St. Helens on October 4, 2004.***











**United States  
Department of  
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**Forest Service**

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